

Changing your mind:

Ephesians 4.11-32 / Romans 12.1-2

This whole series has been under the title ‘[thinking Gods’ thoughts](#)’ and to be honest, we could keep that title up every week because all preaching and teaching is to help us grow in the grace and knowledge of Jesus.

Introduction: the Bible says a lot about our minds and how we use them – ranging from the proverbs to the parable of the sower.

Doug Barnet ‘it’s good to have an open mind, provided it isn’t open at both ends’

Cp Gillian McKeith [you are what you eat](#): the Bible teaches that you really are what you think.

G.I.G.O.

As we are thinking about changing our mind I want you to know that this covers: attitudes / imagination / focus & attention / habitual thoughts:

[As a man thinks in his heart, so is he](#)

Emerson ‘[a man is what he thinks about all day](#)’

Marcus Aurelius ‘[a mans thoughts dye his soul](#)’

Richard Sibbes ‘thoughts are the seeds of actions’

Sow a thought – reap an action

Sow an action - reap a habit

Sow a habit - reap a character

Sow a character - reap a destiny

The mind is the control tower of character / conduct and conversation

We can think profitably or unprofitably, rightly or wrongly and the effects will be seen in our lives.

When we were born again our minds had a choice:

- we can think how we used to (school teachers / parents / peers etc)
- we can not think at all
- the best option however is to change our minds

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**Luke 6:43** "No good tree bears bad fruit, nor does a bad tree bear good fruit. **44** Each tree is recognized by its own fruit. People do not pick figs from thorn bushes, or grapes from briars. **45** The good man brings good things out of the good stored up in his heart, and the evil man brings evil things out of the evil stored up in his heart. For out of the overflow of his heart his mouth speaks.

How to know what someone is thinking: watch and listen to what they do and say – our thoughts have a profound impact on our health, our happiness and the way we live our lives.

**Bucket & balloon**

**Pro 4:20** My son, pay attention to what I say; listen closely to my words. **21** Do not let them out of your sight, keep them within your heart; **22** for they are life to those who find them and health to a man's whole body.

The way we feel can be traced to something we have been thinking about – if you spend a lot of time feeling bad, perhaps you should check what is going on in your mind?

Is this Pollyanna? Phil 4.

Don't fret or worry. Instead of worrying, pray. Let petitions and praises shape your worries into prayers, letting God know your concerns. **7** Before you know it, a sense of God's wholeness, everything coming together for good, will come and settle you down. It's wonderful what happens when Christ displaces worry at the centre of your life. Phil 4:6-7 (MSG)

So let's look at our base passage for today:

Ephesians 4.17-24a MSG:

**17** And so I insist—and God backs me up on this—that there be no going along with the crowd, the empty-headed, mindless crowd. **18** They've refused for so long to deal with God that they've lost touch not only with God but with reality itself. **19** They can't think straight anymore. Feeling no pain, they let themselves go in sexual obsession, addicted to every sort of perversion. **20** But that's no life for you. You learned Christ! **21** My assumption is that you have paid careful attention to him, been well instructed in the truth precisely as we have it in Jesus. **22** Since, then, we do not have the excuse of ignorance, everything—and I do mean everything—connected with that old way of life has to go. It's rotten through and through. Get rid of it! And then take on an entirely new way of life—a God-fashioned life, **23** a life renewed from the inside **24** and working itself into your conduct as God accurately reproduces his character in you. Eph 4:17-24 (MSG)

Ephesians passage: walking right is related to thinking right – compare the futility of mind (literally **vacuum**), understanding is darkened – this then spills over into the heart and the behaviour.

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Ephesians 4.23 AMP: 'and be constantly renewed in the spirit of your mind – having a fresh mental and spiritual attitude'

Eph 4: putting off is something we must do: JB Phillips "fling off the dirty clothes of the old way of living, which were rotted through and through with lust's illusions, and, with yourselves mentally and spiritually re-made, to put on the clean fresh clothes of the new life which was made by God's design for righteousness and the holiness which is no illusion." this is another way of saying as a Christian you should be changing from what you were, Romans 12 says 'don't be conformed to this world.'

What is a favourite piece of clothing you have had for years and can't seem to discard? Flares? Tank tops? (puritan bonnet)

Some things we must outgrow and put off.

Repentance – metanoia – a change of mind and intention

This is more than positive thinking (although, that's better than the alternative!) it is a renewal of the mind, of your thought processes.

Ppts with celebrities – then ask questions about things in the background

Phil 4.4-8 – we can choose what to notice – what to foreground

Col 3.1 fix your mind

George Sweeting 'Gods cure for evil thinking is to fill our minds with that which is good'

Cp blue elephant and apple tree.

It's very difficult not to think about something: but if we fill our minds with the positive truth of Gods word we will be able to refuse and reject all negative and untrue input like:

Worry / fear / resentment / impurity

<sup>8</sup> Summing it all up, friends, I'd say you'll do best by filling your minds and meditating on things true, noble, reputable, authentic, compelling, gracious—the best, not the worst; the beautiful, not the ugly; things to praise, not things to curse. Phil 4:8 (MSG)

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**Partake:** feed your mind on the word of God – daily, just like you do your body

**Protect:** if your mind can be fed, then it can also be poisoned

**Practise:** it won't change overnight, but keep going

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Your mind is used to pleasing itself, but it is **your** mind, you **can** direct it – otherwise God wouldn't have said you can – we are used to living with our minds in neutral, a passive receiving state just sucking up (futility / vacuum) any old dirt.

Eph 4.23 renewed: ananeo – implies that the whole course of life now flows in a different direction

- 1) recognise that you have the mind of Christ 1 Cor 2.16: unrealised potential maybe, but can be realised.
- 2) Choose to think rightly (Nees birds)
- 3) Sift and examine your thoughts in the light of scripture Heb 4.12, 2 Cor 10.5 (taking every thought captive to the obedience of Christ)
- 4) Refuse to think about some things: Rom 12.2 saturate your mind with the Bible, meditate on the word (Psalm 1.2-3)

Rom 12.2 two commands; be not (conformed) but be ye (transformed) how? By the renewing of your mind.

The world wants your mind, so it exerts pressure from **outside**, but the Holy Spirit wants you to be more than that (see Rom 12.2 MSG) and so he changes our minds by releasing power **within**.

<sup>2</sup> Don't become so well-adjusted to your culture that you fit into it without even thinking. Instead, fix your attention on God. You'll be changed from the inside out. Readily recognize what he wants from you, and quickly respond to it. Unlike the culture around you, always dragging you down to its level of immaturity, God brings the best out of you, develops well-formed maturity in you. Romans 12:2 (MSG)